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The FCC has asked for feedback on the E-Rate NPRM, proceeding 13-184. Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) in New Orleans, LA has made excellent use of E-Rate to help our students and teachers in the pursuit of college and career readiness. However, E-Rate funding levels have not kept pace with OPSB bandwidth needs. We support raising the E-Rate funding level to at least $5 billion per year, which is close to the average demand level for each of the past two years.

I am the Executive Director of Information Technology for OPSB in Louisiana. I assure you that the ready availability high speed, highly available access is the key to succeeding in the effort to reinvent education across the country. What students must learn is dramatically different from what students needed to learn when I was in school. To meet the demand, access to the Internet is not a nice to have, it is a mission critical asset. Without high bandwidth, highly available access, students cannot be prepared for College or Career.

In our district we have used the network made available via E-rate funds to alter the delivery model for instruction such that using instructional technology tools students are assessed to determine their level of mastery on the skills they are required to have to be successful. Because the tools available make it possible to have each individual student working on the specific lesson set suited to their specific needs, we are seeing great strides in student outcomes. If the FCC is not able to see its way clear to increasing the funding available for E-rate eligible projects, the advances we have made will begin to demand more than the district has the funding to support. The obvious by product would be a slipping away of the advances we have made to date.

The E-Rate program has been hugely successful in bringing Internet access to every classroom in New Orleans. In the last funding cycle, applications from schools and libraries requested a total of more than $5 billion—twice the amount of available funding. I respectfully urge the FCC to increase funding for the E-Rate program to at least $5 billion to meet this demand. All students need access to high-speed broadband. Our nation's future depends on their success.